



# Rape and Sexual Assault in Massachusetts, 2005-2006

## Incidents Reported by Survivors Who Seek Help from Rape Crisis Programs

In Massachusetts an estimated 17% of women and 6% of men experience sexual assault<sup>†</sup> in their lifetime.<sup>i</sup> To respond to the needs of survivors of sexual violence and their communities, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) funded 17 local Rape Crisis Centers (RCCs) across Massachusetts, as well as a statewide Spanish language helpline. The information below is a summary of data collected by these programs over a one-year time period.

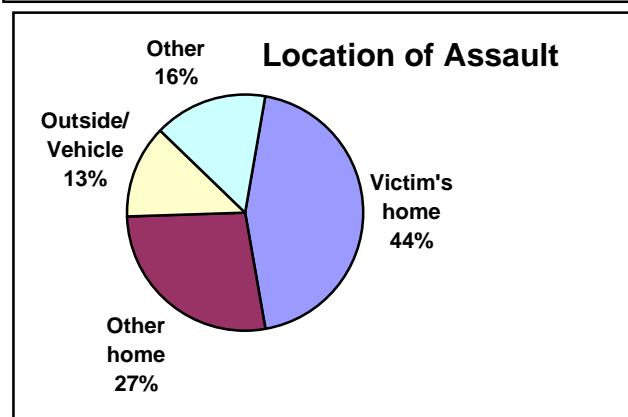
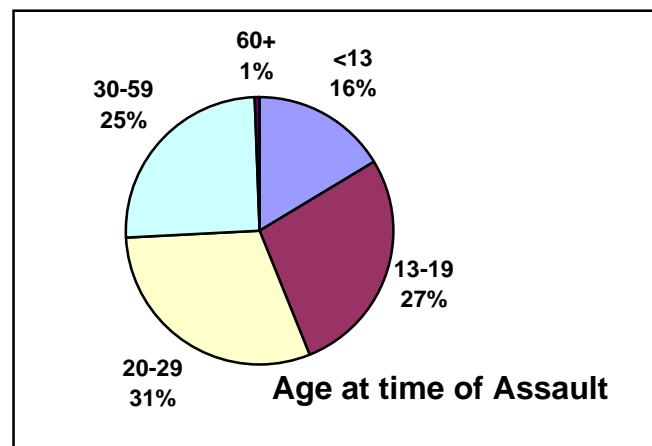
From July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, trained rape crisis counselors from MDPH-funded RCCs and the statewide Spanish language helpline **responded to over 12,000 hotline calls**; over 7,000 of these were from survivors.<sup>ii</sup> In addition to information on the number of hotline calls received, counselors also collect information on incidents of sexual assault that are reported to them during the course of providing services. The primary purpose of hotline counselors is crisis intervention; as such, counselors complete data forms to the best of their ability, but data may be incomplete. The extent of missing data on a particular question is noted in the text. RCCs and the statewide Spanish language helpline received 2,582 unduplicated reports of sexual assault. Of these reports, 1,663 were made directly by survivors. The data presented below detail these reports from survivors only.

### Among the survivors who reported to RCCs and the Spanish language helpline:

- **93% were female**, of 91% who provided information on their gender;
- Age at the time of assault ranged from 1 year to over 60 years, of 87% of callers who provided information on their age;<sup>iii</sup>
- **41% of victims reported injuries** in addition to the sexual assault, of 52% who provided information on additional injuries;
- **Over a third (34%) reported having a disability**, of 55% who provided information on disability status at the time of the report.

### Circumstances of the assaults:

- **Almost half of sexual assaults reported occurred at the victim's home**, of 67% in which information was provided on location of assault.



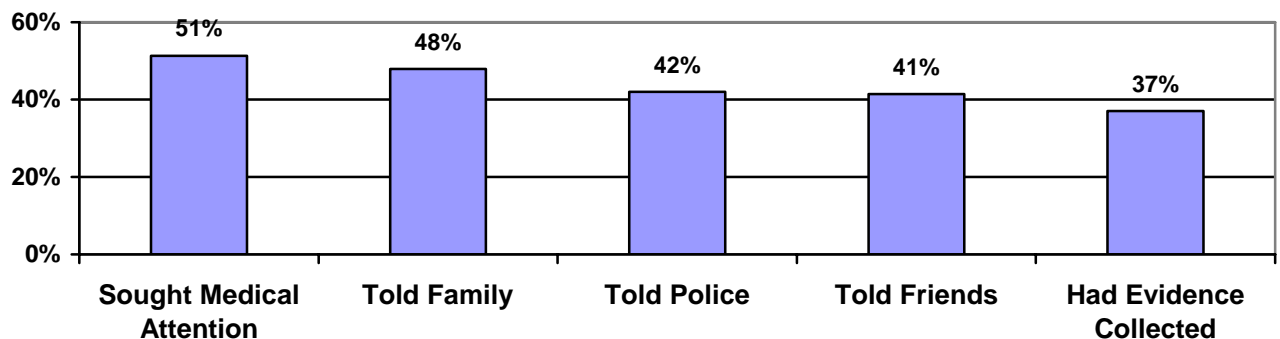
<sup>†</sup> Lifetime sexual assault is defined as ever having experienced rape, attempted rape, or physical sexual assault. This is not the definition used in previous year and data may therefore not be comparable.

## Sexual Assault Perpetrators:

- Survivors reported that **friends and acquaintances** committed 34% of assaults, followed by 24% **current or ex-spouses or partners, dates, boyfriends/girlfriends**; 17% **parents, step-parents, siblings, or other relatives**; 16% **strangers**; and 9% other perpetrators, of 81% of assaults in which information was provided on victim-perpetrator relationship;
- Based on survivor reports, **younger victims** (<13 years) were most often victimized by **parents** (37%) or **siblings and other relatives** (29%). **Adolescent victims** (13-19 years) most often reported the perpetrator as a **friend or acquaintance** (47%), followed by **strangers** (15%), and **date/boyfriend/girlfriend** (14%). **Adult victims** (age 20 and over) most commonly identified perpetrators as **friends or acquaintances** (35%) and **current and former partners** (33%).
- Men committed 95% of reported sexual assaults**, of 81% of assaults in which information was provided on perpetrator gender. 90% of assaults involved males perpetrating against females, where perpetrator and victim gender were known (77%).

## Survivors who also sought other help:

- Some survivors **told family (48%), friends (41%), and/or police (42%)**, of 71% who provided information on reporting to others;
- 51%** sought **medical attention**, of 75% who provided information on medical attention;
- 37%** had **forensic evidence collected**, of 74% who provided information on evidence collection.



**If you need help please contact your local rape crisis center.  
See attached list for resources.**

## Data Collection and Limitations

Data contained in this report are reported to Rape Crisis Centers by survivors. Providing support and information to survivors is a priority of RCC counselors, over data completion. For more information about sexual assault-related data, please see the Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services website at: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/sapss>

<sup>i</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A Profile of Health Among Massachusetts Adults, 2005. Boston, Massachusetts: Health Survey Program, Center for Health Information, Statistics, Research, and Evaluation, Department of Public Health.

<sup>ii</sup> Hotline services are provided for survivors, family and friends, and professionals for support and resource referrals. Survivors may call the Hotline multiple times or may prefer to discuss the assault in face-to-face counseling rather than on the hotline, thus the number of calls to the hotline is a measure of service use and is not a measure of sexual assault incidents reported to DPH-funded RCCs.

<sup>iii</sup> Many survivors do not contact RCCs immediately after they are assaulted but may seek services later in life. Data on age at time of assault is collected in order to illustrate the demographics of victims as accurately as possible.

